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East of the Soochow Creek

Chapter 3 of 3

Bodo (Bud) Zimmermann

Prologue

During the 1997 International Film Festival in San Francisco, a movie titled "Exile in Shanghai" was shown.
Since my parents and I were among the many refugees who were exiled from Germany to Shanghai in 1940, I was very interested to see this movie. The movie consisted mainly of interviews about the lives of six German, Austrian and Russian Jews in Shanghai, China. After seeing this movie I felt compelled to write to the German film director Ms. Ulrike Ottinger to tell her that anyone unfamiliar with the Jewish refugee experience in Shanghai would get the impression that all refugees lived a life of luxury & that she had completely overlooked thousands of refugees who suffered for years under primitive living conditions in refugee camps & who died of malnutrition, tuberculosis and other tropical diseases.

This story is written to give the reader an insight of how most of the 20,000 German, Austrian and Polish Jews really lived and survived in Shanghai during 1940 until 1945 when World War II ended.

I dedicate this story to my best "Old China Hands" friends, Freddie Herrmann, Horst Lang, Willie Lesser and Rene Willdorff now living in Palo Alto, California.

My sincere thanks to Pat Xavier of Toronto, Canada, formerly of Shanghai, China who patiently corrected some of my grammar and shortened my long sentences.

Bodo (Bud) Zimmermann
San Francisco, California
July 10, 1998

East of the Soochow Creek.

We left Dairen, Manchuria, on Monday June 16, 1940 on the Japanese steamer "Dairen Maru" and arrived three days later in Shanghai. We had finally completed our trip from Berlin, Germany by train through Russia, Mongolia and Manchuria.

My parents, my 22 year old brother Herbert and I who was 12 years old, disembarked at the Shanghai-Hongkew Wharf also known as the Ningpo Wharf. The wharf was crowded with people shouting and waving to the dazed passengers coming off the "Dairen Maru".
Chinese dockworkers clambered aboard to help unload the cargo, the booms on deck of the ship lowered heavy rope nets filled with crates, boxes and suit cases which landed with a crash on the dock. Coolies scrambled to separate the discharged cargo and carried them to the various Custom inspection areas.
This busy activity was accompanied by a lot of shouting and the noise of the creaking booms as they swung back and forth on the ship.

I was overwhelmed by the noise of the crowds of people, the unpleasant smells, the unbearable sweltering heat. I was wearing the winter clothing I wore when I started on this trip the previous month in Germany. I envied the British custom officials, dressed in short sleeved white shirts, white shorts, white knee stockings and protected from the searing sun by a pith helmet; they looked sharp and cool in their white uniforms.
They were very efficient in the way they managed to keep in order the milling crowds who had just disembarked from the "Dairen Maru".

Once we had located our baggage we were quickly passed through the Customs. We were greeted by my sister Gerda and her family who had arrived in Shanghai from Germany two years earlier. It was a very happy reunion.

The weather seemed to be getting warmer and more unbearable by the minute; I was perspiring terribly. It was only June and I wondered what the weather would be like during the summer months.

My brother-in-law had bargained and reached an agreeable price with 4 rickshaw coolies to take us and all the baggage to his house. I was impressed with his knowledge of the Chinese language. One rickshaw took all of our baggage, it was followed by the rickshaw which carried my brother-in-law and my brother, the third rickshaw carried my parents and my sister, the baby and I were in the forth rickshaw. When the coolie picked up the handlebars of our rickshaw I thought that the coolie would not be able to hold the rickshaw in balance and we would all topple out backward.

As the coolie was pulling our rickshaw through the noisy and over crowded streets, I began to understand the arrangements my brother-in-law. made Sitting in the second rickshaw, he was able to watch and see that the first rickshaw did not disappear with our baggage and my sister made sure for the ~~other~~ rickshaw coolie who pulled our parents would followher husband's rickshaw so that we all arrived together at my sister's house.

I was surprised with myself, for accepting the fact that a man would pull such heavy loads in his rickshaw in this tremendous heat. The coolie pulled the rickshaw at a fairly rapid pace without slowing down. Sweat was pouring down his back. The thin ragged shirt he wore was soaking wet. Watching him and the new surroundings we passed through, made me forget how hot and uncomfortable I was in my winter clothing. When we arrived at my sister's house 20 minutes later, I thanked the rickshaw coolie in German. My brother-in-law told me in a rather stern voice,"You don't ever thank a coolie, this is his job and he gets paid for pulling the rickshaw". I guess I was being introduced to colonial behavior towards natives. It just did not feel right to me.

My sister's house was located in Hongkew. Hongkew was the eastern section of Shanghai, it was separated from the down-town area by the Soochow Creek. Originally, Hongkew was part of the International Settlement. When the Japanese invaded China in 1937, they took control of Hongkew. West of the Soochow Creek was the International Settlement controlled by the British, and west of it was the French Concession.
Since Hongkew was part of the International Settlement there were many steets with English names. My sister's house was on 813 East-Seward Road. She and her husband had a small candy store and their tiny aprtment was located right above the store. I was disappointed to see them live in such small rooms. We were tripping over each other. We did not expect such terrible humid heat and we were very happy when my sister served us some ice-cold drinks.

My brother-in-law had rented a house for us across the street from his store at 810 East Seward Road House #77.

Shanghai has an interesting lane housing arrangement. Number 810 was the main entrance into this lane system. The main lane which is approximately 12 feet wide extends from the entrance to the end of the #810 complex. Smaller lanes extend at right angles left and right from the main lane. In each of these lanes were small two-story houses with maybe a 15 foot frontage. The houses are build next to each other. So in the first lane the houses begin with #1 and ended with#20. The second lane started with house #21 to #40, the third lane started with house #41 to #60 and so on, Some of these complexes had 100 houses within this lane system.
At night the main entrance would be locked and a watchman would only open the gate for people who lived there.
Each house had a main entrance on one lane and a back entrance on the next lane. Except in rainy weather, there were always bamboo poles with laundry hanging from them which extended from

the second floor of one house across the lane to the house on the opposite side. In this humid weather the laundry seldom dried completely.

Our house #77 had two small rooms next to the back entrance. One was used as a kitchen, the other as a bathroom and toilet. Straight ahead was a living room approximately 12'x 10', this room in turn had a small high walled courtyard approximately 5'x 10' with 2 large doors which opened into the next lane. Between the kitchen and the living room was a steep stairway leading to the floor above. There was another small room above the kitchen and a large room above the living room. The stairway continued up a few more steps and opened up onto a small concrete roof deck about6' x 6'. from here you would put your laundry on a bamboo pole and rest it on the opposite house across the lane.

Most of the houses in Hongkew had the same design. Our house had an old fashioned gas stove, which belonged to the Shanghai Power Company, in the kitchen. But there was no flush toilet in this house, this was a terrible shock to us. We used wooden pots on which you sat and did your business. The next morning a "mo dung" man would come around with a black square wooden tank cart into which he emptied all the pots in the lane.
We had to get used to a new way of life and a new way of doing things. After the "mo dung" man left, the empty pots had to be cleaned, so all the neighbors in the lane would scrub out their pots with long bamboo brushes consisting of narrow bamboo strips which were tied together at one end and with the aid of mussel shells and water you swirled the shells which acted as an abrasive with the brush until the pots were clean. You saved the mussel shells in a separate can to be used again the next day. All the waste water was poured into the open drains which ran along side the houses on each side of the

of the lane. This became an unpleasant morning routine, but you got to meet your neighbors that way.

Between seven and eight o'clock in the morning the "mo dung" men had collected the smelly contents of the pots from all the neighborhoods and they were pulling their carts to the Soochow Creek where the contents were emptied into barges and taken up-river to the farm country where this night soil was used as fertilizer. A very smelly affair.

After we sort of settled into the still strange surroundings, my father enrolled me in the Kinchow Road School. This was an English school which was given to the German Jewish refugees by a very wealthy Iraqui Jew who was knighted by Queen Victoria. His name was Sir Eli Kadoori, a well respected gentleman not only in the Shanghai community but throughout the Far East.
I could speak only a few words of English - not enough to make myself understood. I was told it was forbidden to speak German in this school. Summer school had just started. It consisted mainly of sports activities and some class work.
Well, I participated in the sports activities but as soon as the bell rang for classes, I would disappear. I was afraid to go to class because not being able to speak English would make me look very foolish to the other students.
So, instead I explored the Chinese neighborhood near the school. There was so much exciting activities on the streets, there were craftsmen of all kinds, shoemakers repairing shoes with very simple hand tools, (there was one repairman whose work really impressed me he repaired broken porcelain bowls and vases with little brass staples) candy makers, magicians,gamblers operating different gambling games, open air kitchens and all sorts of peddlers all carrying their wares and tools in two baskets which were suspended from a bamboo pole which they balanced on their shoulders.The vendors would set up their wares in front of stores and the store owners didn't seem to mind.

All this activity was accompanied by a lot of noise. The sandal peddler would clap two wooden sandals together to attract customers, some advertised their wares by a repeated sing song or they would call out their special product. There was one peddler who held two pieces of bamboo in his hand and clacked them together like a castanet, in one basket he carried a little clay stove filled with burning charcoal, on which was a metal bowl with boiling oil in the other basket he had thick slices oftofu some plates and chopsticks. If somebody wanted to buy his "tsu decoi" he would put down the baskets take a slice or two of the tofu and deep fry it in the boiling oil to a nice light brown color and serve it to his waiting customer with a red chili sauce. It looked delicious but I was still afraid to eat it. After the customer had eaten he returned the plate and chopsticks which the vendor then wiped clean with a rather dirty looking towel ready for use for the next customer.
I had never imagined that I would see such activities, it was fascinating to me.
I would tell my brother about everything I saw after coming back from school. My father would ask me, "Don't you have any homework ?"
" Oh no, we do it all in class". Well, this did not last very long. My father received a letter from the school inquiring where his precious son was. Because he had not attended any classes during the past two weeks. I was severely dressed down and was taken by my brother to school who made certain that I went to class. There he met my new teacher Mrs. Le Brange and explained the reason for my absence.

Mrs. Le Brange was a very kind white-haired British lady, she took me under her wing, gave me lots of home work, and within a year taught me how to read, spell and speak English quite well. I continued to enjoy the sports activities and really loved the British school and our international teachers much more than the very strict schools I attended in Germany.

My father met various times with the local agent of the Italian Shipping Company who handled our freight shipment from Germany. Our household goods and merchandise should have been received in Shanghai by then. The agency had no idea what had happened to our shipment until they were advised that the German government had requested its return to Germany.
My father's plans of starting a business in Shanghai were shattered and my parents were devastated. We had hardly any money left. We could not afford the rent for the house and immediately moved out to a smaller place on 416 Tongshan Road, House #22.

My father offered his services as a window decorator to the major department stores in Shanghai. The managers of these stores liked the European ideas of displaying merchandise very much and this enabled my father to generate a little income. My brother found a job with a Chinese engineering company but they did not pay too well. He then joined a Japanese engineering company where he designed tool and die making machinery. He was very happy there and was well liked by allthe other employees. But he was still waiting for replies to his applications to American and British companies. Somehow we managed for the time being to survive.

In the meantime I continued school. During shool examinations we were not allowed to leave the school grounds during breaks. One of my class mates suggested that in spite of the rules we go out and buy some candied peanuts from the vendor outside the school. We could not leave through the main gate, so we decided to climb over the wall at one end of the soccerfield, which was close to the street. On the other side of the wall was a large empty field with a small building not too far from the wall. As we jumped off the wall to run through the field to the street I saw an old rusty skeleton of a machine gun lying on the ground. After buying the peanuts from the vendor we ran back to the wall before the bell rang and I picked up the rusty machine gun and placed it on the wall. We climbed back

over the wall onto the school side and since the bell had not rung yet we played with the machine gun and pretended to shoot at the small building.We made, what we thought, were machine gun noises when all of a sudden a platoon of Japanese soldiers with guns at the ready came out of that building and ran towards our wall. Well, the tough fighters we were, we dumped the machine gun back into the field and ran for our lives and hid in the restroom.
Later on we found out that the Japanese officer talked to our principal Mrs. Hartwig, and she wanted to find out who the boys were who dared to break the school rules. The following year the Japanese attacked Hawaii and started the war with the United States and their allies We hoped that nobody would blame us for starting this terrible historic event.

Our financial situation was getting worse, inflation devalued the money my father and brother brought home. So again we had to move to less expensive housing. We rented a room from a Russian lady and her policeman husband. This house was located across from an area covered with rubble from homes which were destroyed by the Japanese when they invaded China in 1938. Besides a few beggars who lived on this field, there were rats, who made their nests in the remaining standing houses. We did not know this until we moved into the house. The first night my father and brother killed at least a dozen rats. We just could not live there. The Russian lady kept the cleanest house, everyday she was on her hands and knees scrubbing the floor with soap and water. Maybe she thought that this would keep the rats out. When her husband returned home at night, usually very drunk, he would beat his wife mercilessly. I had never seen a man hit a woman before, it was terrible. The lady begged my mother not to move out because with us living downstairs her husband treated her a little better. However, due to the continuous rat invasions we moved

out after a few days.
Since our freight was confiscated (stolen) by the German government. There was no hope for us to improve our financial situation. So we moved again to another location on Tongshan Road.
The heat during the summer was unbearable. The only relief was to fan yourself with a hand held folding fan,electric fans were out of the question. I did not know anyone who owned an electric fan. At night when it turned a little cooler we sit outside in the lane just like all of our Chinese neighbors did. Across the lane from where we lived there were always quite a few pretty young ladies sitting and enjoying the cool evenings. They always made eyes at my brother and would burst out giggling hiding their faces behind their fans. There was a young white boy about my age who was running errands for them. I tried to make friends with him but he only spoke Chinese. I learned later that this was a house of prostitution. At that time I had no idea what this meant.

My parents felt that it would be best if I left school and learnt a trade. My brother was very much against this idea. My parents reasoned that times had changed, the only refugees who were able to survive were people who had a trade, like mechanics,plumbers, tailors, locksmiths etc. The intellectuals among the refugees had no opportunities to earn a living in Shanghai. I didn't want to leave school, but then things changed overnight. During the night of December 8th, 1941 in Shanghai (it was still December 7th in Hawaii) we were woken up by heavy gun fire. Someone said, "The war has started" but we did not believe it, we thought it was some military action between the Japanese and the Chinese forces. Because in the past you could hear gunfire exchange between these two warring countries from far away. But the heavy gunfire continued and it seemed to come from the nearby Whangpoo river.

The following morning, Japanese marines, recognizeable by the red stripes on their collars, with riflrs and bayonets lined the streets of Shanghai. The rumors continued that the Japanese had attacked the United States. The thought of some country attacking the United States was ludicrous. And the night before a Japanese warship had attacked an American and British naval vessel on the Whangpoo river. A few days later this rumor was confirmed in local newspapers as being true. Mrs. Le Brange told us that the Japanese would place all American and British subjects into war prison camps.

Shortly after that the Japanese Military Authorities proclaimed that all German Jewish refugees would have to move into a restricted area within Hongkew. Refugees who had established businesses and lived in downtown Shanghai had to give up their existence and apartments, which by the way, were much better than anything that could be found in Hongkew, and move into the crowded restricted area which we shared with Chinese residents. However, Chinese residents could come and go from this area without any restrictions, while refugees had to obtain a special pass from the Japanese authorities.
The pass was only valid for certain hours during a 24 hour period. Such a pass had to be obtained from a dictatorial Japanese administrator of the restricted area, a Mr Goya, who called himself the "King of the Jews".
The restricted area was surrounded by barbed wire rolls and the street entrances into and out of the area were guarded by Japanese soldiers and Chinese police.

In the beginning of 1942, against the objections of my brother, I was apprenticed to a Viennese Confectionery " Frankel's Cafe" on Wayside Road. My father told me that the first year of any apprenticeship was very tough but I would have to grit my teeth and survive this apprenticeship.
I met Mr. Frankel, who was a very short and powerfully built man. He assured my father and me that we would get along fine and he

would make a good pastry chef out of me. I couldn't understand Mr. Frankel's German because he spoke with an Austrian accent.

I went to work the next morning. The journeyman, Gunther Lindemann, advised me that during the first year it would be my responsibility to keep all utensils and the workshop clean. I would have to help him, Mr. Frankel and another baker Walter Nesselbaum whenever I am asked to do so. I was not allowed to take any notes in the bakery, I would have to train myself to remember things.
I felt abandoned among these three strangers. I tried my very best to do everything right but I just was not able to please them. I had to grease baking sheets and cupcake molds and was always chewed out because I didn't grease them right. Either I left some dry spots or I used to much grease. They showed me how to sift flour. I couldn't do it as quickly and without raising flour dust as they did. When Mr. Frankel spoke to me I couldn't understand him too well and I always said, " I beg your pardon?" which after a few times drove him up a wall. One day he was cutting cookies so he asked me to bring a baking pan and hold it against the table so he could place the raw cookies onto the pan. Boy this was easy so I rushed over with a greased baking pan and held it against the work bench when he pulled the pan out of my hands and hit me over the head with it and said," You idiot,you don't hold the pan with the narrow side against the work bench, you hold it with the long side against the bench"
I had a difficult time not bursting into tears. I remembered my father saying that this was going to be a tough time for me. After the work was done, I had to wash all the pots and pans, scrape the two work benches and then wash and dry the concrete floor while the journeyman sat on the work bench and watched me work. After I had scrubbed and dried the floor, (it is a very tough job to dry a coarse concrete floor) he filled up a bucket with water and poured it over the floor and said, "This is not what I call clean, do it again". Controlling

my tears I did it again. And then he repeated it again with another bucket of water. I cleaned the floor three times and he said, "Well its not realy as clean as it should be but I will let it go, this time". I went home and finally was able to cry my heart out. I told my father what had happened but he didn't go to the bakery to complain how his son was being treated and to put a stop to it.
I had to make sure that the flour bins and sugar bins were always full, that meant after cleaning the floor I had to bring down from the third floor 50 lbs. bags of flour and sugar and made sure that I didn't spill any on the floor otherwise I would have to scrub the floor again. I hated my job and the people I worked for. But I bit my tongue and continued this terrible job.
Eventually I was able to help in weighing out the ingredients from a hand written recipe book. After doing this for two weeks I was told to weigh out ingredients for certain recipes and was not given the recipe book but was given a warning not to make a mistake. I had never felt so insecure in my life. What would happen to me if I made a mistake. Somehow I survived the first year.
During this year I also had to take instructions in Hebrew for my bar-mitzvah. I hated this more than my job. I asked my father what was so important about a bar-mitzvah ? Would it improve my life ? No, he said but you will be taken on the responsibilities of a man in the eyes of God. I told him that my first year of apprenticeship already proved that
What I didn't like about the Hebrew instructions that I was being taught to read from the Torah (which I was able to do)was that I was damned if I knew what I was reading. And I was wondering whether my father knew what he read when he conducted the prayers during the holidays.

On the day of my bar-mitzvah Mr. Frankel gave me a day off. I did not have a suit for this dignified occasion. My brother's was too big, however my brother-in-law was closer to my size but his suit was still too large for me. So the trousers were pinned up on the

shirt under my armpits so the pantlegs would not drag on the street. The white shirt was too large and so was the tie but it was all covered up by the jacket which was also too large. Dressed like a clown, my parents took me to the synagogue El Tabarin on Broadway, which at night turned into a nightclub. I read the Torah with a loud and commanding voice and must have impressed the congegration who thought that I understood every word I read and congratulated me and my proud parents, on the moving and emotional reading I did. Now I am a man ! What a farce! I still had to do my parents', Mr. Frankel's and the journeyman's bidding.
Back at the confectionery I started to learn the actual mixing, make-up, baking of various pastries I learned to decorate French pastries, I was than only 14 years old. Mr. Frankel would check the decorations with a ruler, the decorated lines on the pastries had to be the same size and distance apart on each piece of pastry, since I had never taken a course in draftsmanship I was a great disappointment to Mr. Frankel and even though I was not an apprentice any longer he took great pleasure in chewing me out. Also, since there was no new apprentice I still had to do the cleaning of the premises. I must admit though, whenever Mr. Frankel did anything, it was always PERFECT.

Quite often we had torrential rains in Shanghai and when the rain and high tide coincided, the water from the Whangpoo river would back into the sewer system and eventually would spout out of the sewers into the streets of Shanghai especially in the low lying areas of the city. The water would be up to three feet deep swishing with all kinds of unmentionable dirt which had been flushed out of the sewers. Stores and houses would be flooded at such times, but people waded through this deep and filthy water and continued to do their business. Generally, when the tide turned the flood waters returned to the sewers and back into the river. This happened once at the bakery. The water did not enter the bakery or cafe, but the drain in front of the bakery entrance was plugged up and did not drain

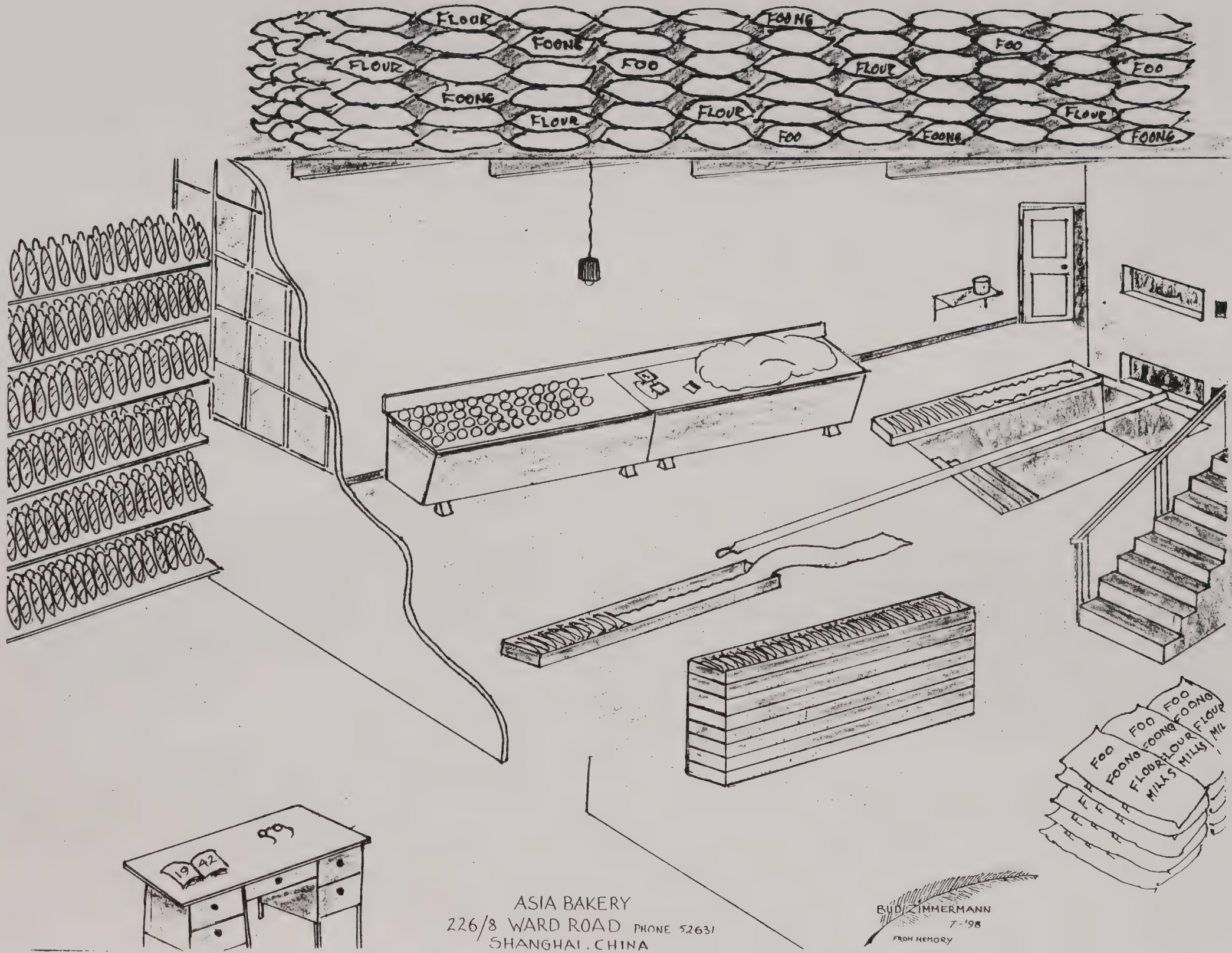
after the tide had turned. Mr. Frankel told me to clean out the drain. I aked him, " Do you have a stick I can use?" No, he said. "So how do I clean it?" You idiot, he would always put his stress in his pronounciation on the last two letters in the word idiot, you use your hands. I thought of the honeypots which had been cleaned earlier that morning and all the other filth that was floating and submerged in this drain plus the possibilities of rats. Well, I knelt down in this filthy and smelly water and removed the obstruction with my bare hand. I did not look to see what it was, I just flung it away and went home crying. This time my father got upset and apparently raised hell with Mr. Frankel that same afternoon. The next day Mr. Frankel was very nice to me until the afternoon when he sliced one of the tarts I made. The tart consisted of 3 layers, a layer of poppyseed filling, an almond filling and an apple filling. As hard as I tried I could never get the fillings to look even in the tarts.Again he called me an "Idiot" and other insulting things. I had to cook an apricot jam later that afternoon. Cooking jams was always a torture because when the jam starts to boil it has to be constantly stirred so it won't burn on the bottom and invariably hot jam would spurt out of the pot and would land on your arm. This hot jam hurt something terrible and would leave blisters on your hands and arms. Well one of those spurts landed on my arm and I said to myself why do I have to put up with so many insults. I turned up the heat on the cooker, took off my apron and walked out of the confectionery. A few minutes later Mr. Frankel came running after me shouting, " Bodo, come back we'll talk" I hollered back, " Never, Mr. Frankel" and went home. My father was very upset withme, "You don't ever walk out on a job, go back and apologize otherwise your whole future is at risk, nobody will ever want to hire you". etc. etc. I said, "No, you and a hundred horses could not drag me back to this hellhole. I'll learn something else, I don't want to be a baker!"

Since my future was at risk I had to do something so I went to see a movie! " Strike up the band" with Mickey Rooney. Here were these 16 year old high school kids all clean cut, they did not have to clean out filthy drains, they earned money by delivering newspapers on bicycles, the grown-ups treated them like adults, they had fun in school. Mickey Rooney, played the conductor of the high school band. The band planned a school dance to raise money for something or other against the principal's wishes. What a life! All my friends would have loved to have gone to a school like that.

In June 1942 my sister was taken to the Great Western Hospital. She had lost a lot of weight due to malnutrition and had contracted tuber-colosis. There was no medication available which could have helped her and she died during the same month. This was a terrible shock to the whole family. Many refugees, young and old died from tropical diseases and lack of nourishment. Doctors who were not familiar with tropical diseases at first did not know how to treat them, but they learned quickly.

In spite of my father's gloomy prediction that no one would hire me, I found a job at the Asia Bakery on 226 Ward Road house #8. This was a Chinese owned bakery but it was managed by a Polish Jewish refugee who developed the business and catered to the refugee popu-lation.

The bakery was located in a typical lane house in which the downstairs area had been converted into a bakery. The upstairs rooms were kept intact and were used as storage facilities.
The main products were 16oz. French loaves and a few loaves of whole wheat bread. Everything was made by hand. There was not one piece of machinery in this bakery.
At one end of the bakery were two wood-fired brick ovens one built on top of the other. The opening to the lower oven was at floor level. In order to load this oven the bakers had to step into a pit which was about 4 feet deep $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide and 6 feet long. When the lower oven was not in use the pit was covered with wooden boards and the baker was then able to use the upper oven.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FROM MEMORY

The other equipment consisted of two long work tables, each about 3½ feet wide and 9 feet long. The table tops were covers for two troughs underneath. The troughs had about the same dimensions and were about 2½ feet deep. Each trough was used to mix 350lbs. to 450lbs. of dough by hand. This was accomplished by two bakers and took them about 40 minutes to complete. We generally mixed 4 to 5 batches a night. The doughs had to be mixed at different times about 2 hrs. apart. This gave us time to weigh out the dough that was ready for processing.
The dough was weighed out by hand, 18 oz. each, the baker molded these pieces of dough 2 pieces at a time into round balls, these balls were neatly lined up on the work table when there was no more space on the work table the rounded dough was placed into special wooden boxes. By the time the dough had been weighed out, the first dough balls were ready to be molded into loaves of bread.

As the new boy it was my job to put the molded loaves into long wooden boxes, about 10 feet long, 1½ feet wide and 5 inches deep. Each box was lined with a long piece of cloth about twice the length of the box. I had to put one loaf with the seam up on the cloth, than I would have to pull up the cloth about 4 inches against the first loaf and place the next loaf against this partition than I would pull up the cloth again and place the next loaf against this partition and continued to do so until I had 30 loaves in the box, each loaf separated by this wall of cloth. I had to work fast because the bakers molded these loaves very quickly. It was very important to have the seam of the loaf up and the cloth wall high enough between the loaves, so when the loaves started to rise they would stay separated from each other and not stick together. If I did it correctly, which at first I didn't, the foreman would count the boxes multiply them by 30 and he had the count for the batch of the dough.

We started work at 4 pm and worked through the night until 6 am the next morning. We took breaks whenever time permitted but we did not

leave the bakery while on a break.

The first thing that had to be done was to set the sponges. A sponge is a partial very soft dough in which the yeast is diluted. If the batch required 250 lbs. flour we would use 50 lbs. of flour to make a sponge. When the sponge has risen and it would collapse when you touched it, that was the sign that the sponge was ready and the dough had to be mixed. The water for the remaining 200 lbs. flour and the salt was poured into the sponge and then the mixing began.

In the meantime the ovenman had to light the lumber that had been placed in the ovens that very morning after all the baking had been completed. The lumber in both ovens was lit with paper and kindling wood. It was easy when the the lumber was nice and dry but when it was wet it was very difficult to get the fire started.
The burning lumber had to be moved with an iron rake all over the hearth so that the bricks in the oven were evenly heated. The fire would burn 3 to 4 hours until the the wood had completely burned and only charcoal and ashes remained. You knew the oven was ready when all the soot on the inside roof of the oven had burned off and all the bricks had their natural color.
At this point the ashes and the charcoal were raked out of the oven into the pit in front of the oven, water was poured onto the ashes to extinguish the glowing coal which sometimes were not completely extinguished. When the water would be poured on the glowing coal the steam would carry dust from the ambers all over the bakery.
I had to carry the ashes and charcoal up to the roof where there was a concrete area where our honey-pots were. When a baker used these pots he could always report if the coal was still glowing.It wasn't so bad in the wintertime as it kept the area a bit warm. But then we had to run upstairs with buckets of water and extinguish the glowing coal.

The next operation was to wash out the oven and get rid of any coal pieces remaining on the hearth. This was accomplished with a 15 foot

long bamboo pole which at one end had an empty potato sack attached to it. To prevent the potato sack from burning it was dipped into a bucket of cold water. Then the bamboo pole with the sack was put into the oven and swirled around until all the charcoal pieces were flung out of the front opening of the oven.

Naturally all the dust that was generated when emptying the ashes from the oven was now brushed off all the surfaces we could see while it was light. When it turned dark, the whole production area which was about 25 feet long by 15 feet wide, was lit by one 60 watt bulb, (We were under black-out orders) this bulb was covered by a black shade which was red on the inside. This light was located over the work table so the baker could see the scale when he was weighing out the dough but otherwise we walked and worked in this eerie red glow. There were two more electric lights, one for each oven which were placed in a special opening next to the oven door and which would light up the inside of the ovens.

I had to help the ovenman to load and unload the ovens. The loaves which now had risen, were flipped out of the cloth and placed seam down onto a wooden peel about 15 feet long and maybe 8 inches wide. When the ovenman pushed the peel into the oven the peel was long enough to reach the end of the oven then the loaves were slipped off the peel onto the hearth. Then, with a twist of his wrist,the oven-man would make the empty peel shoot out of the oven. You had to stay clear of the oven area because you did not want to be hit by this peel. For the corners of the oven we used smaller peels. When the peel was empty I sprinkled cornmeal on the peel, the ovenman loaded the peel with the loaves, I had to to brush the loaves with water and stick a label on each loaf identifying the loaf as having been made at the Asia Bakery and stating the weight of 16 oz. All this had to be done at high speed. The ovenman and I worked like a pre-cision team. The oven had to be filled before starting to take out the baked bread. One oven load was about 120 loaves. The loaves baked very quickly at first but as the oven cooled it took a bit longer with each load

The baked loaves were pulled out with the peel. I took the hot loaves off the peel placed them in a box next to the oven and brushed them with a hot cornstarch solution which gave the loaves a nice sheen. This again had to be done at high speed. It was hard work, especially during the very hot and humid summer months. It was stifling hot in the bakery we all worked dressed only in shorts and everyone was sweating more than the rickshaw coolie who pulled us from the dock to my sister's house.

The perspiration poured into the dough when it was mixed. It fell on the loaves when they were molded and again when they went into and came out of the oven.

My friend Siegfried Herrmann,(I called him Freddie) who was also 14 years old, and I started to work at the Asia Bakery at the same time. Within a few weeks, we learned every job in this bakery operation including mixing the doughs which was the hardest and most back breaking job. We worked 14 hours a day 7 days a week. the only days off were the high Jewish holidays so we could thank someone for our blessings. But we had to produce in advance to cover the production the day we were off.
For this work we received the equivalent of about US $15.00 per month, one small sack of charcoal per week and 1 loaf of bread every day. We were never paid on time, sometimes two weeks late. In the meantime, inflation would eat up part of the value of our earnings. The money was just enough to buy a decent pair of shoes, not that I ever did! I wore wooden clogs and turned my money over to my parents. In Freddie's case he gave it to his mother.

Food was insufficient. Freddie and I would go to a small delicatessen and buy a ½ oz. of liverwurst. We would split a loaf of French bread lengthwise in halves then spread this ½ oz. over the surface of half of the loaf and cover it with the other half. At least we got a little

bit of flavor into our system. The liverwurst spread easily over the warm bread. We drank gallons of tea. There was no fan in the bakery, no ice cold soft drinks, oh yes, we would cool our tea in a bucket of cool well water. We would also pull a bucket of well-water out of a well which was located in the lane and pour this cool water over our bodies just to cool down for a few minutes. It was suicide to drink this well water because it was very polluted, but we used the well water in mixing our dough, otherwise the dough would rise to fast and we couldn't control our production. We believed that the heat in the oven would kill any bacteria.

At night Japanese military patrols came to our bakery and exchanged cigarettes for one or two loaves of bread. Sometimes they were very nice and showed us pictures of their family; they always thanked us. Except one night, two soldiers came in and started to help themselves with loaves of bread. We told them they could only have one loaf. One soldier became very belligerent. One of our refugee bakers, Herman Kahn, a powerfully built man who had spent time in a German concentration camp, approached this soldier wrested the gun from him broke the butt of the gun over his knee and threw it out into lane. The other soldier grabbed his friend and ran out of the bakery and picked up the broken gun on their way out.
We thought for sure that they would bring back re-enforcements and would shoot us all. But Mr. Kahn said, don't worry they were drunk and wouldn't dare to report what happened. They never came back.

The long hours, the hard work and the miserable light in the bakery made everyone very exhausted. Sometimes we would do our work half asleep. I would weigh out the dough and would see large insects crawling over the dough or I saw pieces of dirt on the dough which I would pick off and throw it away or try to brush the insects away. There weren't any insects or dirt. It was all in my delerious imagination. This happened to everyone there, if you saw a baker brushing something away or hitting at something on the work table you knew

right away that he was over tired and in some dream stage. But if you nudged the person a little he would immediately snap out of this hypnotic stage

The Shanghai summers were unbearably hot and humid. Some days the temperature reach over 100° F in the shade with 95% humidity and it wouldn't cool down much in the evening or even at night. Besides, at night we had to put up with the heat from the ovens.

Freddie who lived with his mother and sister on Wetmore Road the eastern end of the restricted area, would always pick me up on his way to work. He would whistle the first few bars of " Hold that tiger" that was our signal that he was waiting for me. On our way to work we would sometimes stop and watch the street gamblers. We knew we could not win because the gamblers knew how to control the different gambling games and you were at their mercy. We watched this one gambler shuffling three black disks, one of the disks had a red spot on the bottom. The object was to place your money on the disk with the red spot on the bottom. We watched him for a while and watched the passerbys lose and sometimes win money. The fellows who won the money were cohorts of the gambler. Freddie told me to watch the black disk with the red spot. It had a tiny piece of thread on one side. Sure enough, I saw it. As soon as the gambler started a new game I placed a few cents on this particular disk and won, I increased my bet and won again. I continued this a few more times, when someone hollered "Shimbu" (Police!) And the gambler took off, and the crowd dispersed. My mistake was to continously place my money on the winning disk. The gambler thought I knew what he was doing and before losing more money to me he closed shop and probably opened up on another street. Anyway we had enough money to see a movie.

There was another way we were able to make some extra money. Twice a month the bakery would receive 300x50lbs sacks of flour. Our boss was too cheap to pay the coolies to carry the flour upstairs. On those days Freddie and I would come to work 2 hrs. earlier and carry the flour upstairs and made enough money to buy a movie ticket and candied peanuts. We were just crazy about these peanuts.

They had a white sugary coating which contained sesame seeds. The peddlers would make these right on the street. There was a candy maker who made delicious rolled up strips of sesame candies. You would eat this candy by unrolling it an inch at a time and biting it off. The candy maker cooked the sugar in a metal bowl to a certain temperature on a small charcoal-heated stove. Then he would pour this hot viscous mass onto the sidewalk which he had previously cleaned and covered with a layer of oil. He would first let this sugary mass cool and then knead it. When it reached the right consistency he would twist off a ball the size of a tennisball and knead in roasted sesame seeds. Then he would twist off smaller pieces and roll them into finger thick strips about 12 inches in length and then flatten themout and roll them up. This was all done on the sidewalk- not on a table but on the sidewalk! This candy maker was an artist, each roll he made was precisely the same thickness, the samewidth and height, and the same weight. All this was accomplished without any tools. Like all the Chinese kids around us, we also bought the candy and ate it. It was good!

Back at the bakery, not only did we carry the flour upstairs we also had to stack it neatly. On the average there were 400 sacks of flour and other ingredients stored on this upper floor, which was not designed to carry this much weight. The joists which held up the floor boards were not more than 1 inch by 5 inches. Every time a bomb detonated somewhere in the distance we would leave the bakery just in case the ceiling collapsed. After finishing this job we looked like Australian bushmen covered with white flour dust ready for some religious ceremony. Being hot, sweaty and caked with flour dust we would go out and wash ourselves with cold refreshing well water.
I was so parched and thirsty that I took a few swallows of the well water which felt so refreshing.
A few days later I started having stomach aches and came down with diarrhea. It wasn't the first time that I had it so I didn't pay

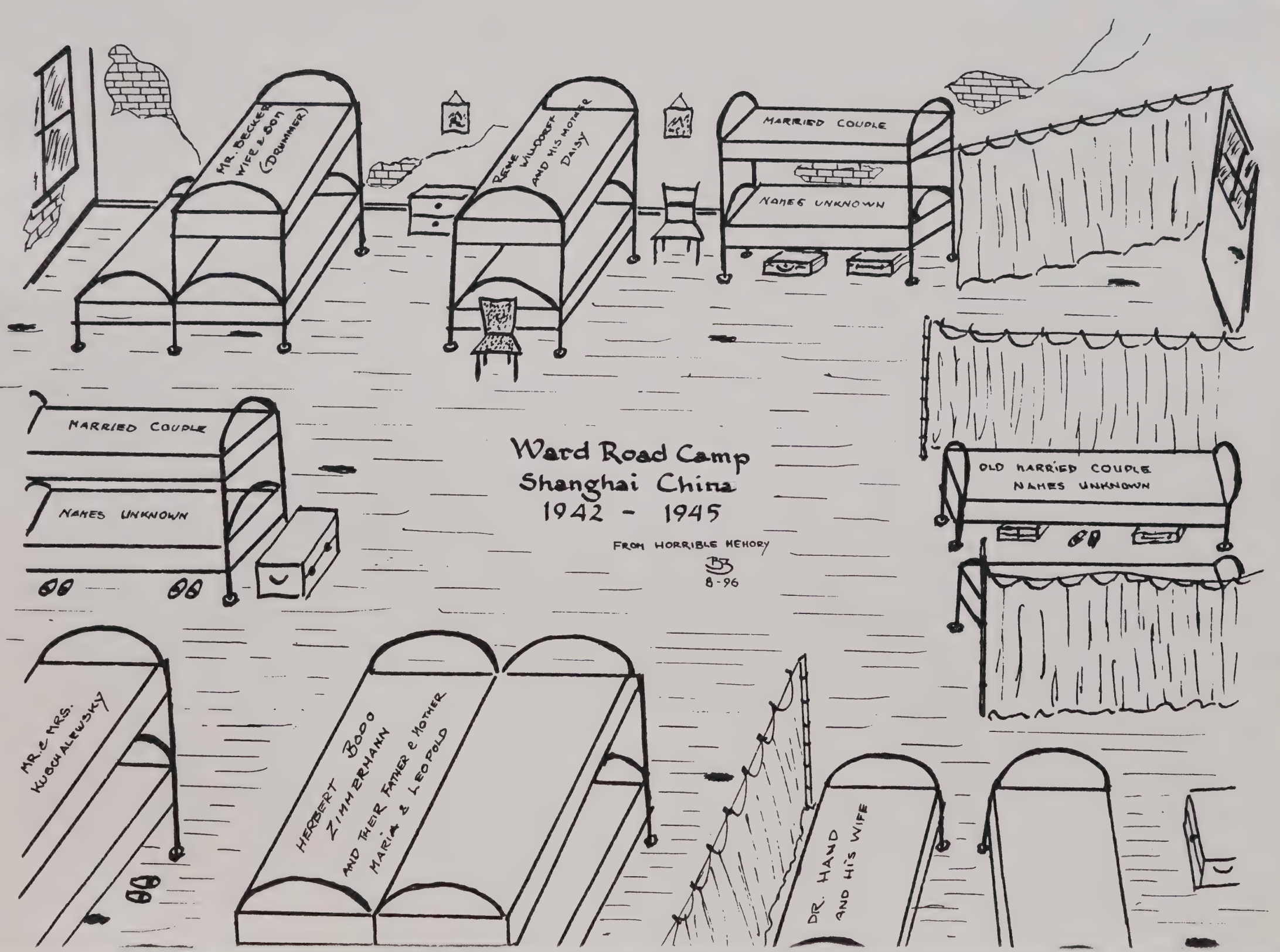
any attention to it. It just would not stop and I became so weak that I could not control my bowel movements and would dirty myself before I had a chance to reach a pot. I came down with a fever and Freddie had to take me back to my parents in the middle of the night. He tried to keep up my spirits by singing and whistleing, " It's a long way to Tipperary" a song we learned in school and which we always whistled when we met Japanese patrols on our way home from work.

I had contracted typhoid fever, para typhoid, pneumonia and on top of it beri-beri a disease caused by vitamin deficiency. The following day I was taken by ambulance out of the restricted area to the Packoi Road Hospital. I stayed there for 4 months during which time I nearly died. The doctor and the nurses told me, when I was lucid again, that I was in my second life. Twice during my stay they had made preparations for my departure. I didn't know anything about it. Except, I remembered a delirious dream I had, I lived in a very long coach-like room with many windows, each window had a window box with tulips growing. I was told to watch the tulips and keep them from falling over, if one of them did, I would die. I ran up and down along those windows reaching out and straightening up the tulips which were about to fall over. When I straightened out one tulip at one end then another began to fall over at the other end. I ran back and forth to keep these darned tulips straight. I guess I did a good job because I came out alive!

I was terribly weak and under nourished. My parents were in no position to give me the nourishing food my body required. Friends of my parents would invite me to have lunch with them on a regular basis. There was one family , the Wolf's. I knew their son Kurt. They operated a little bakery. They fed me for two months and gave me food to take home. Even Mr. Frankel sent his new apprentice with some baked goods for me.

During my recovery I became good friends with Rene Willdorff. We lived together in the Ward Road Camp, in one room which we shared with a total of 19 persons. I believe that part of the Ward Road Camp was a school at one time, as our room and all the other rooms in this building resembled class rooms which at one time in the past had seen better days.
Since I either worked or slept I had never spoken to Rene until I came out of the hospital to recuperate for two months before returning to work at the Asia Bakery.
Rene was still attending school, he went to St. Francis Xavier college. His English was excellent and he was very knowledgeable about general things of importance. He was a great story teller and would accompany his stories with sound effects which he made like whisteling wind, squeaking doors, galloping horses and engine noises. He told quiz stories to which there was only one logical solution. I really enjoyed his friendship and envied him because he was going to school. His mother was a very nice lady and very intelligent lady. I always thought of her as a school teacher. She liked me because of my good manners and always told Rene, "Look how Bodo is holding his cup with his little finger extended from the cup" I used to tease him about it. Just like me, Rene didn't have any clothes to speak of. So every night he would check his clothing for spots and if there were any he would clean them with a wet towel. And every night he would carefully fold his clothing so they would not be wrinkled the next morning when he had to go to school which he attended with some very snobbish students.

We all had double bunks, one bed on top of the other, since there were four in our family we had two double bunks next to each other. My parents slept on the lower beds while my brother and I slept on the upper beds. There was a space between our bunks and our neighbors bunks. The wife, of the couple next to us , also slept on the upper bunk. Whenever she would see me on the street she would introduce me as her sleeping partner. It always embarrassed me because she was rather old. Living in such close quarters with so many people


MR. BECKER WIFE & SON (DRUMMER)
RENE WILDORST AND HIS MOTHER DAISY
MARRIED COUPLE
NAMES UNKNOWN
MARRIED COUPLE
NAMES UNKNOWN
OLD MARRIED COUPLE
NAMES UNKNOWN
Ward Road Camp
Shanghai China
1942 - 1945
FROM HORRIBLE MEMORY
8-96
MR. & MRS. KUCHALEWSKY
HERBERT BOOO ZIMMERMANN AND THEIR FATHER & MOTHER MARIA & LEOPOLD
DR. HAND AND HIS WIFE

was quite an education for me. People tried to live in a civilized manner but it was very difficult under these crowded conditions with no privacy. Husband and wife quarrels became everybody's business. Disagreements were rampant, if you moved a chair to close into your neighbor's area they would quarrel for days because you infringed upon their property. People were just on edge all the time. What amazed me was that former doctors , lawyers, scientists and judges were the worst trouble makers. I suppose that they felt the loss of the aura of respect that they were showered with back in Germany or where ver they came from.

I went back to work at the Asia Bakery where nothing had changed except for the money we earned which bought less and less each month. Our boss sold some flour on the black market where he made more money than selling bread. Still he was not able or did not want to pay us on time. The longer he dragged out the payday the less he had to pay us because the money kept on losing value. However he could not go overboard with selling flour because the flour was rationed and had to be purchased from Japanese-owned warehouses. The flour which we received was old and full of weavels which are called "confused flour beetles". We tried to sift them out but this was an impossible task. Every time you moved the sieve clouds of flour dust would fly throughout the bakery and once caused a little ear shattering explosion when someone had lit a match. Fortunately no one was hurt. We ended up with some singed hair, burning eyes and aching ears. However we continued with our work but did not sift any more flour. We mixed our dough with beetles and all. Nobody complained, people at first would pick out these beetles but after a while they were just eaten with the bread.

Since we couldn't afford to buy a ½ oz. liverwurst any longer. I came up with a somewhat dishonest idea. I suggested to the foreman

that if we add a ½ bucket of water to each each batch of dough we could come up with extra loaves of bread. The loaves wouldn't be quite as round in shape but we can always blame this on the terrible flour we have to use. We could then trade the excess loaves for food from the open air kitchens. I was amazed how quickly everyone agreed to this idea.

We had a Polish bookkeeper who also acted as a watchman at night. He never sat in the bakery but he would sit in the courtyard where he did his bookkeeping and at times would count the bags of flour that we were to use that night.

In order to move 30 to 50 loaves out of the bakery we had to take some diversionary actions. We would sift flour and raised enough dust that you couldn't see your hands before your eyes and the bookkeeper who smoked wouldn't dare to come into the bakery. While this was taking place two bakers would disappear with a couple of flour bags each full of bread, and take them to the open air kitchens where arrangements had been made earlier to deliver 12 portions of noodles vegetables and fish or meat to the bakery. We did this every night. Sometimes we invited the bookkeeper to share our meal and he in turn would allow us to take an extra loaf of bread home in the morning. These meals helped us to feel much better, we didn't suffer so much from hallucinations any longer, but we were still very tired. Japanese patrols still came in and exchanged cigarettes for bread. They probably did not get to eat enough either.

When the weather became cooler the bakery was invaded by flies. At first we tried to chase them out by waving flour sacks and directing them towards the open door. But this did not help. We noticed the flies liked to sit on one wall which was warmed by the ovens. If you didn't disturb the flies they would just sit there and crawl around a bit. The wall was literally black with flies, thousands of of them. I thought that they came in to die, and they did. Every morning after work and again in the evening before we started work we would sweep up dead flies. After one week the flies were all gone.

Bombing attacks by B-29s became more frequent. It was scary to hear the sound of approaching planes. I wondered where the bombs would explode. There were a few bomb shelters which the Chinese had built but they were close to the surface. A near hit would collapse these structures and bury everyone within. One night though a bomb exploded nearby and shook the bakery building. We heard a sickening sound of cracking wood above us, stacks of flour in the storage above fell over, clouds of flour dust were seeping through the floor boards above. We were stunned for a split second and in another split second we were out of the building. Amazingly, the joists, even though they had cracked, held up the ceiling. Someone brought in some large bamboo poles with which we temporarily re-enforced the joists and Freddie and I, who were the lightest bakers, went upstairs and carefully carried down sacks of flour to ease the weight on the joists. In the meantime the other bakers continued their work.

As the bombing raids increased we had the satisfaction of knowing that the tides of war must be changing in favor of the United States. When there were no air raid warnings the sky was full of Japanese planes, but as soon as air raid warning sirens started these planes would disappear from the skies.
Freddie and I were walking home from work one morning when suddenly there appeared overhead a low-flying black looking airplane with two fuselages and no sound of an engine only a swooshing sound. It flew down the length of Ward Road and then disappeared. We knew that this could not have been a Japanese plane. We were hoping to see another plane like it. So we stopped at one of the outdoor kitchens and ordered a bowl of hot soymilk and a Taping and Yoo tzo gwei. The soymilk tasted horrible but we were told it was the next best thing to milk, the Taping is a round flat bread baked in an oil drum oven, the Yoo tzo gwei is a long, rather greasy doughnut. The Taping is then folded over the Yoo tzo gwei and eaten together like a sandwich. It is delicious - especially if you are hungry. It was getting lighter and we did not see another of these mysterious planes.

Back at the Ward Road Camp, Rene was telling us stories about "Beau-Geste" and the "Four Feathers". Four Feathers was about some British officers who were taken prisoners by East Indians, in one of their many wars. The officers were tortured with bamboo slivers which were pushed under their fingernails in order to make them talk. Freddie and I said that we would make very good British officers because the bamboo slivers would not be a torture for us since we often pick up dried dough splinters under our fingernails. Dough splinters are a very painful affair. When mixing dough you have to slide your hands down along trough wall to the bottom of the trough. This had to be done with force and had to be done fast. If you did not keep your fingernails short you would pick up splinters of dried hard dough which lay along the insides of the trough. The splinter would go halfway under your fingernail and would take weeks before they finally came out. Quite often the fingernail would become infected. This however helped to push out the dough splinter.
Rene who was always full of good ideas,thought that we should join the "Legion des Etrangers" the French Foreign Legion. When you said it in French it sounded very romantic and we knew whatever hardships the French Foreign Legion required of their soldiers could not be as difficult as working for the Asia Bakery. However, there was no way for us to get to Indochina where the French were.

Eventually Hongkew was hit by bombs from B-29s which killed and maimed many Chinese and a few refugees. The refugees were well organized. Refugee doctors, nurses and volunteers helped the wounded Chinese men, women and children. The Ward Road Goal (jail) opened its gates and the dead were placed in the large courtyard for later identification by the police. As a sign of appreciation for the quick response by the refugees during this emergency, the Chinese neighbors around the Ward Road Camp sent us gifts of food.

In June 1945 this long war came finally to an end. Again Japanese soldiers lined the sidewalks but this time with their backs to the street as a sign of capitulation to the arriving allied military forces.

By this time I was 17 years old. Willie Lesser , a very good friend, told me that the Dalny Road Bakery was looking for two good bakers. The pay and the hours at this bakery were much better than at the Asia Bakery. I went to Freddie's house, and discussed this opportunity with him. We applied for the jobs and got them.
It was a much smaller bakery and Freddie and I managed the whole operation while the owner Mr. Meyer, went out to obtain customers. Everything and everybody seemed to improve. The food situation became better overnight.The U.S. Army distributed 10 in 1 rations which contained all kinds of delicacies - at least delicious to us.
U.S. Army, Navy and Airforce personel appeared on the streets. They were all very friendly and happy and not as sombre as the Japanese military.

Rene and I decided that we would go out to the Kiang Wang airport where the U.S, Airforce had landed. There was no public transportation to the airport then and we had only an approximate idea of where the airport was located. No one we knew had ever been there. We started going east on Point Road which took us outof the now no longer restricted area. After walking for about two miles we got into an area which before the war was called New Shanghai. There were many, once beautiful, but now badly neglected European style homes which were now occupied by Chinese, their laundry hanging out of every window. We saw some modern-looking, very large plants.One was a Swiss chemical plant. All were in operation as smoke was coming out of the smoke stacks.
We thought that perhaps we could get a job in one of these plants. Then we saw the Shanghai Baptist College.It looked like an ivy league college with lots of greenery around it.

By now we must have walked at least 4 miles. We judged this by Rene's watch, we figured about ½ hour for each mile walked. We knew that we were getting closer to Kiang Wang because every once in a while an airplane would come in for a landing somewhere in the distance. We came upon an old large race-course. On one of the entrances, hewn into concrete it said, "Far Eastern Race Course". We assumed that it must have been built by the British long before the war. The race-course was a parking lot for many Japanese military vehicles. We did not see any guards but we did not investigate it any further.

We finally reached one of the gates which led into the Kiang Wang airport. The gate was guarded by two Chinese soldiers wearing the uniform (rather shabby) of the Chinese Nationalist Army and straw-sandals. It must have been a minor entrance to the airport as there were no Americans to be seen. The guards did not want to let us enter the air base. Rene spoke to them in English in a very authorotative voice which they could not understand, but they would not budge. Rene than pulled out his wallet and took out a newspaper clipping of an article about a movie. He showed this to the soldier and told him that we were here on orders of General Chenault or something to that effect. The Chinese soldier who did not understand us, much less read what was in the newspaper clipping. He showed it to the other guard who looked at the clipping upside-down on both sides, than he smiled, returned the clipping, saluted and let us enter the airbase. We returned the salute in a typical American off-duty manner. We walked for another half an hour before we saw some U.S. planes and maintanance men. Rene talked to them because his English was very British and far better than mine. Also Rene was more technically informed and knew what questions to ask. The mechanics gave us ice-cold coca-colas and candybars. We told them what it was like living in Shanghai during the war. We saw a Flying Tiger and talked to a

pilot who had been flying missions with the Flying Tigers throughout the war. We were impressed no end. But then we had to walk all the way (at least 6 miles) back to Hongkew. It certainly was worth it. Seeing these airmen in their sharp uniforms without a worry on their minds, happy and joking made us feel inferior, because at the Ward Road Camp there were no chocolate bars or ice-cold coca colas and the people in the camp certainly did not have this carefree attitude as did all the Americans we met. The experience we had at Kiang Wang airport was worth the 12 mile walk.

The next day at the Dalny Bakery I told Freddie about our experience at the airport. He felt bad that he did not go along with us. Some of the American good naturedness must have rubbed off on me because I treated Freddie to some Tso mee, (noodle soup). There were two beggar boys who hung out at our bakery who would run errands for us and as Kumshaw (tip) they would always get some baked goods from us. So I told one of the boys to buy two bowls of noodles for us and gave him the money for it. Few minutes later he came back carrying the two bowls one in each hand with his thumb submerged in the soup. When he gave us the two bowls I noticed that both of his thumbs were clean and pink as compared to the rest of his dirty hands and fingers. But we didn't care, we ate the noodle soup anyway including the dirt that had washed off his thumbs.

Many young refugees found jobs with the U.S. military, some as office workers, others as mechanics or drivers. My friend Willie Lesser met two navy officers in a bar and asked them if they could use a baker on their ship. They said, sure, if you can bake come with us and show us what you can do. Willie was a good baker and they were very pleased with his pastries and invited other officers to have lunch with them. These visiting navy officers were so impressed with Willie's pastries, they asked him if he knew of another baker who would like to work on their ship.

So Willie arranged a job for me on an LCI (Landing Craft Infantry) and I in turn saw to it that Freddie got a job on another LCI. Life was suddenly taking a turn for the better for all of us.

I absolutely loved working for the U.S. Navy on the LCI 220. The crew consisted of 24 sailors and 4 officers. They were the friendliest people I had ever met.Even though they had very responsible jobs they seemed to enjoy everything they did. I thought I was in paradise. Everybody and everything looked clean and spotless. The food aboard the ship was excellent and plentiful. I especially liked the ice - cold jello with fruit cocktail. There was an abundance of never ending food supplies, which enabled me to show off my knowledge of baking. I made crullers , doughnuts, jelly doughnuts or Danish pastries for breakfast. French pastries for dinner besides pies, rolls and cookies. To bake for 28 men was child's play for me so I had plenty of time to spare and helped the crew with their tasks, mainly scraping paint and painting. The crew gave me dungarees; T- shirts, shoes etc. I looked and felt like a full fledged sailor. I became very good friends with Peter O'Flaherty from Santa Rosa, California.

In February 1946, three LCIs #220, #514, #517 and LSM #155 loaded with 860,000 lbs. of food and medical supplies set sail up the Yangtze river. The purpose of this mission was to take these supplies to Chungking and survey the river to determine the feasibility of future U.S. Navy trips up the Yangtze. This was an exciting trip which took us through some beautiful areas along the Yangtze. We passed narrow tall rocky formations with pagodas perched on the top or clinging to the sides of these rocky mountains, I was shown how to handle the various guns on the ship just in case we ran into some Japanese military groups who might not have known that the war was over. Fortunately we did not encounter any such groups. The three months I spent on this ship made me quickly forget the $4\frac{1}{2}$ years of misery in Shanghai.

When the LCI returned to Shanghai after the two weeks pioneering voyage up the Yangtze river, most of the crew made preparations to return to their homes in various parts of the U.S.
I received a glowing recommendation from Mr. Brennan, Lt.jg. This recommendation gave me the opportunity to obtain a job as 2nd cook and baker on the U.S. flag merchant ship "MV Check Knot". So in May 1946 I sailed from Shanghai to Japan , Korea and eventually to San Francisco. I arrived in San Francisco without any valid papers and learned again that life is not as easy and pleasant as it was on the LCI, but full of complications. I also learned that my brother Herbert had died shortly after I had left Shanghai. I finally resolved my difficulties with the Immigration Service and returned to Shanghai on a Scandinavian Freighter also in the capacity of 2nd cook and baker. This ship carried cargo to the Far East and I signed off in Shanghai.

It was a terribly depressing experience to come back to the filthy city and the terrible living conditions which had not changed much since I left there a year earlier. My friends Rene and Freddie were still there which was some relief. But Shanghai had changed for the worse, there were anti foreigner feelings. Quite often we had some annoying encounters with Chinese beggars who would taunt us with curses such as,"Nako ning pissee" (foreign bum) or "gun de" (stinking egg) and other crude curses,anything to incite a fight. We really had to restrain ourselves. But if we happen to run into a gang of beggars, Rene would turn to them and agree with them, " Yes, we are foreign bums, but you, you are like this, and Rene would hold his open hand palm down, level with the punk's head, then he lowered his hand to the ground as if squashing something,then he would pretend to spit on this imaginary squashed thing on the ground and step on it and grind his foot as if stubbing out a cigarette butt. This brief performance always left these bums speechless, and we would turn away and walk off.

A relative of mine whom I had met in San Francisco sent me an affidavit and sponsored me to come to San Francisco. I returned to San-Francisco in June 1948, to begin a new and normal life. My parents remained in Shanghai until 1950 when they returned back to Germany.